



## Chapter 5

### EPILOGUE:

### FIFTY YEARS OLD AND STILL GOIN' STRONG

**T**he visiting high school students could have found no better tour guide than Col. Frank M. Patete. Here was a born communicator, a showman at heart, to lead them through the maze of his realm of government. And his realm was epitomized by the Tulsa District of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

Fall, 1988. Come and walk with the good Colonel through the echoing halls of the Engineers on a tour that might have been. Along the way, we'll collect snapshots of today's Tulsa District: vigorous and active, aging gracefully.<sup>1</sup>

"This is what we're about," Patete told the attentive visitors. "We're 50 years old and still goin' strong."

The aged patina of the old federal building, with its marble, mahogany, and brass, took on a special shine in the morning sun. Patete, in Army greens, led the group into the lobby where he pointed to maps of the District, circa 1988.

"There's a rumor that this staircase is haunted," the Colonel said with a twinkle, pointing to the graceful stairs that rise majestically from the lobby of the 70-year-old building.

"The legend — and I don't believe it, mind you — is that the ghost of the first Tulsa District planner haunts this building, and that he hangs around to keep checking up on how well we're carrying out his dreams . . ."

Patete grinned, then waved his arm with more serious determination toward the District map.

"Today," he said, "we have jurisdiction over the entire state of Oklahoma and portions of Kansas and Texas. We work with programs that begin with flood control and range from fish farming to lakeshore management to inland waterways — including hydropower, the navigation system, operations and maintenance for 37 projects, comprehensive planning studies."

### CATFISH FARMING

**A** new industry in the making? Maybe. About 250,000 six- to eight-inch fingerling catfish formed the first crop "planted" in an experimental fish farm at Lake Texoma in May 1987. The idea: test whether the popular channel catfish can be raised commercially in large net pens suspended in area lakes. RedArk Development Authority and several federal agencies, including the Corps of Engineers, are sponsoring the three-year experiment. RedArk hopes to boost the southeast Oklahoma economy with water resources development. Initial fish farming results are successful.

